

IMPORTING A POPULATION

BY EDWARD P. IRWIN,
In the Pacific Monthly

In their heavy, padded coats, thick woolen shirts, fur and astrakhan caps, and long leathern boots they almost made seem unreal the warm sun, soft breezes and waving palms of the Hawaiian day. It was as if a village of the Siberian steppes had been transported to the semi-tropics and set down bodily in the midst of the City of Honolulu.

Some of them, mostly women and children, were sprawled on the grass or sitting patiently beneath the trees in the old palace yard, but most of the men, several hundred strong, were packed like sardines in the large office of the Governor, who was talking to them in a language that, except through an interpreter, they could not understand.

Governor Frear, facing them, was facing at the same time new conditions, and the most serious problem with which the Western outpost of the United States has to deal. He was confronting not only a throng of newly-arrived Russian immigrants, restless, dissatisfied, suspicious, but also—and more important—the problem and urgent necessity of acquiring for his Territory a population.

"Men Wanted"—Any Kind?

Hawaii, the Island Territory lying in the midst of the Pacific, yet as much a part of the United States as is Maine or Illinois or California, is engaged in the serious, difficult, and as recent events have demonstrated, the dangerous business of importing a population. She is buying Men, in the hope that the purchase will result in profit to the Territory—or if not to the Territory as a whole, then to the sugar plantations.

And to get men the agents of the Bureau of Immigration and of the Planters' Labor Bureau are scouring the earth. They are shipping their human cargoes from Europe and from Asia, from the ultimate West and the Far East. In ragged, hungry, hopeful hordes the assisted immigrants have for several years been pouring into the Islands that stand as the westward sentinels of the United States of America. They have been purchased with promises of better conditions of life, with hope, with the desire of change. They do not know to what they are coming, but most of them believe that, whatever it prove to be, it can be no worse than what they leave in the land of their nativity.

For many years Hawaii, as monarchy, republic and now as a Territory of the United States, has been engaged in this pursuit of men, this importation of a population. But it is only within the past short time that the Government of

the Territory has been directly concerned in the strange traffic. Before it became necessary for the Government to take charge of the assistance of immigration, the sugar planters managed the business themselves and for themselves.

In theory, the object of the assistance of immigration to Hawaii is to build up an American citizenship like that of other communities of the United States; to establish an independent, prosperous population of families, each living on its own homestead and earning its living by the sweat of its collective brows and the toil of its hands. Whether or not this is in reality the object most sought may be best judged from the methods employed and the results attained.

An Attractive Theory.

The theory is certainly an attractive one. To collect in Hawaii people from the four quarters of the globe and fuse them into a homogeneous whole, make of them a citizenship worthy of the ideals of the greatest Republic on earth—what could be more idealistic?

But a theory to be worth consideration must be based on something firmer than an ideal. Utopia is not gained by pursuing Utopian methods. In the attainment of any object the laws of nature must be considered; the experiences of others should not be forgotten.

And it was long ago demonstrated conclusively by experiment that no good can result from an attempt to fuse the blood of the white man with that of the yellow and the brown. Yet the sugar planters of Hawaii, while talking enthusiastically about the Americanization of the Territory, have filled it up with Chinese and Japanese, Porto Ricans, Portuguese, Spaniards, Filipinos and Russians, and would have the rest of the community believe that from this mixture of incompatibles they can concoct an American citizenship worthy to rank with the citizenship of other communities.

It may even be true that the majority of the immigrants brought to Hawaii turn out to be peaceable, law-abiding home-builders who really desire and work for the prosperity of the country. But they are not American in color, ideas, ideals or customs. For the most part they still remain Spaniards, Filipinos, Porto Ricans, Japanese—whatever they were when their passages to Hawaii were paid by a beneficent Government or charitable sugar planters' association. And the fact that there is comparatively little inter-marriage among the various races,

though a disproof of the beautiful theory of those idealists who believe that all men are brothers and should marry with their brothers' sisters of whatever race, color or previous condition of servitude, is probably the chief redeeming feature of Hawaii's assisted immigration work as now carried on. Miscegenation is not looked upon with favor in other American communities and there appears no good reason why it should be considered good for Hawaii.

Yet if the various races do not coalesce, how is it possible to make one people of them? The Territory of Hawaii, therefore, is impaled on the horns of a

dilemma—a most uncomfortable situation, to put it mildly.

(To be continued)

What is the honest opinion of the citizens of Honolulu as to the character of the last government-aided shipments of Russian immigrants from Siberia. Were they not as a whole a riff-raff set?

Can anyone deny that Democratic "Boss" McCandless steady hammering on the land law didn't force the Republicans to pass the present Homestead Law?

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